

NATURE'S

WASHINGTON CROSSING STATE PARK, NJ

Summer 2016

FIND GREAT FISHING SPOTS CLOSE TO HOME

By Mike Ramsey

I've found many great fishing spots close to Washington Crossing State Park in the vicinity of where I live. In fact, several excellent places are less than a half hour drive from my home. Some are even as close as five minutes! Longer distance fishing trips can bring on the fun and excitement of an adventure. However, when you find great spots close to home, you save time, money and gas and you will tend to get out more often with less extensive planning and packing. This can be really helpful especially if the event involves children. It's hard to beat rolling out of bed onto the bank of some fishing hole with pole already in hand, awaiting the first cast.

Central New Jersey has many great ponds, streams, lakes and rivers with good fishing closer than one would think. I live in Pennington and plenty of great fishing spots are less than thirty minutes away. Niederer's Pond is on Church Rd., Hopewell Twp. in Washington Crossing State Park. The Delaware & Raritan Canal and the Delaware River are also located in or around WCSP. The canal is trout-stocked and the river has numerous species of game fish including reportedly some of the best bass fishing in the area. Rosedale Lake and the Stony Brook can both be accessed from Rosedale Park also, in Hopewell Twp. The Millstone River is in the Princeton/Rocky Hill area. Mercer Lake is in Mercer County Park in West Windsor Twp. Colonial Lake is in Lawrence Twp. Amwell Lake, a state-owned fish and wildlife management area, is on Route 31 in West Amwell Twp. Some of these are stocked with trout. All of them contain native populations of bass, bluegill, catfish and other game fish species.

Locating a good fishing hole is relatively easy. Online resources are the most convenient. The NJ Division of Fish & Wildlife website "Places to Fish - Ponds, Lakes and Reservoirs" (www.state.nj.us/dep/fgw/fishplc.htm) catalogues locations by county. State, county, and municipal park web pages will also be helpful. Of course satellite, GPS and map-based applications like Google Earth might also be useful. One can also peruse printed county maps and USGS quadrangle maps. The drawback on the use of printed and electronic maps is that it can be difficult to tell if the area is posted as private property or if it's open to fishing. Always get permission from the owner when fishing on private property. The most useful and reliable way to obtain information



photo credit: Wayne Henderek

Niederer's Pond in WCSP is a great place for kids to learn to fish.

is to simply ask seasoned fishermen where they go. Experienced folks, who fish locally, will often also volunteer information on bait, tackle, technique and conditions.

Before you do any fishing you'll need a fishing license and a trout stamp (where required) unless you are exempt from being required to carry a license. Fishing licenses can be purchased at sporting goods stores, and bait and tackle shops. It's also helpful to have a copy of the *NJ Fishing Digest*, which is available free wherever licenses are sold. This publication will help you keep track of the rules and regulations including size and creel limits (amount). Get to know these limits so that your fishing activities comply with the law. Fishing regulations sometimes change slightly from year to year as a means to maintain healthy fish populations. Most fishermen and women understand that the rule changes are merely good-sense fish management measures and are not intended to fool the fisherman. Take only what you intend to use within the legal limits and quickly release the rest unharmed, making sure tired fish have a chance to revive before letting them go. Catch and release is a fun way to fish since the fish get to live to reproduce and perhaps to be caught another day. It is a really great way to fish if you have children as you don't need to haul the fish back home to clean them and because you won't be killing fish unnecessarily.

Above all, appreciate all of our parks and open spaces, be courteous to all who want to enjoy them and treat them with



respect and appreciation. Observe and obey all park rules and regulations. Don't litter. Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints.

Volunteer Notes

✿ **Jim Wade**, Princeton, delivered an outstanding presentation on local Native Americans.

✿ **Ken Kremer**, Lawrenceville, discussed America's manned space exploration efforts to be implemented in the near future.

✿ **Gene Ramsey** and **Jennifer and Dave Skitt** of the **Amateur Astronomer's Association of Princeton** gave park visitors an up-close look at the sun over Memorial Day Weekend.

✿ **Franta Broulik**, Lambertville, of **Washington Crossing Audubon**, led a walk on the trails and grounds in search of the spring and summer birds of the park.

✿ **Ellen Coleman**, Ewing, staffed the Nature Center during public events.

Around the Park

We have received an increased number of reported coyote sightings in the park this past spring. Coyotes have inhabited WCSP for a long time and sightings have traditionally been uncommon. Their numbers are apparently increasing.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) mitigation has commenced in WCSP. EAB is an invasive bark beetle pest that threatens the destruction of ash tree populations throughout eastern North America. We have begun preemptively removing ash trees in the Greene Grove picnic area. The selective removal of potentially dangerous trees will continue throughout the park over the next several years.

Seasonal Naturalist William Gragilla has worked the past two summers at the WCSP Nature Center. He has recently taken a permanent Park Ranger position with Burlington County. Congratulations Will!

School groups, preschool groups, home school groups and scout groups from Burlington County, Hillsborough, Sussex County, Princeton, Pennington, Hopewell Twp., Ewing and Titusville visited the WCSP Nature Center this spring for interpretive and outdoor education activities. The programs offered were Build a Rope Bridge, Shelter Building/Wilderness Survival, Compass Basics, Pond Study, Wild Edible Plants, Forest and Field Ecology, Geocaching and Stream Stomp. Camp and community group leaders, teachers, scout leaders and home schoolers should call us if they would be interested in scheduling activities for summer and fall.



photo credit: Kim Evans

Seasonal Naturalist Kevin Kavanaugh delivers hands-on instruction in Forest and Field Ecology to some local third graders in WCSP.

This newsletter is available free of charge electronically. It can be downloaded at the web address below. Requests to be included on the emailing list may be made by contacting the Nature Center.



Phone.....(609) 737-0609

Fax.....(609) 737-0627

Email.....wcspcsr@comcast.net

Hours.....Wed - Sat 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Sun 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Closed Mon and Tues

Website.....www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks/washcros.html

**Park Naturalist
& Newsletter Editor**.....Wayne Henderek



SUMMER PROGRAMS AT THE NATURE CENTER

The following is a list of activities being offered through the Nature Center at Washington Crossing State Park in Titusville, NJ. Some programs are offered without registration requirements; some will require advanced registration. A fee of \$5.00 per car (\$7.00 out-of-state) will be charged to all motor vehicles entering the park for daytime programs on weekends and holidays through Monday 9/5 (Labor Day). Some programs are offered without charge and all programs will initially meet at the Nature Center unless otherwise specified below. Attendance is limited and is available on a first-come, first-served basis. An adult must accompany all children. In the event of inclement weather, some programs might be canceled. It is always advisable to call ahead before coming out. These events are available to families and individuals only. Programs for scouts, schools, camps and other groups are scheduled separately upon request by special arrangement.

Phone : (609) 737-0609.

NIGHT HIKE (6 yrs. - adult) Saturday July 9, 8:30 p.m. Explore the park for nature at night and have some good old-fashioned fun on this naturalist-guided hike and campfire. Bring a flashlight. Enter the park from the entrance on Bear Tavern Rd (Phillips Farm/ Group Camping Entrance) and follow the event signs to the Nature Center. Advanced registration required.

FAMILY NATURE WALK (all ages) Saturday July 16, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Join us for an informal naturalist-guided trail walk. Park vehicle entrance fee applies.

IN SEARCH OF SHALE (all ages) Sunday July 17, 1:30 p.m. Find out where the Indians of Central New Jersey would travel in search of the stone materials they needed for making their tools and weapons. Learn why some of the most abundant varieties of shale in the area were so extensively used by the Indians. A short presentation will be given at the Nature Center by long-time WCSP volunteer instructor, **Jim Wade**. Actual Indian stone tool artifacts, from Mr. Wade's collection, will be shown. This will be followed by a short trail hike to one of the local shale deposits and outcrops and possibly other location of interest in the park. Park Vehicle entrance fee applies.

TRAVEL BY HAIKU (teens – adult) Thursday July 21, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Writer, Poet, Musician, and Dream Laborer, **Marshall James Kavanaugh** will share readings from his book of haikus. These creative expressions were inspired by Marshall's experiences with the natural world, as he traveled across America. Enter the park from the entrance on Bear Tavern Rd (Phillips Farm/ Group Camping entrance) and follow the event signs to the Nature Center. In addition, this nature-inspired program will include several local performing artists. For excerpts, videos, and more info: <http://bit.ly/TravelByHaiku> from A Freedom Books <http://www.marshalljames-kavanaugh.com> Advanced registration required.

POND STUDY (6 - 12 yr. old) Sunday July 31, 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. Kids will use pond nets to collect and examine the various organisms that inhabit our pond. Meet at the pond by the park service entrance off of Church Road in Titusville. Advanced registration required.

NIGHT HIKE (6 yrs. - adult) Saturday August 6, 8:30 p.m. Explore the park for nature at night and have some good old-fashioned fun on this naturalist-guided hike and campfire. Advanced registration required. Bring a flashlight. Enter the park from the entrance on Bear Tavern Rd (Phillips Farm/ Group Camping Entrance) and follow the event signs to the Nature Center. Advanced registration required.

FAMILY NATURE WALK (all ages) Saturday August 13, 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Join us for an informal naturalist-guided trail walk. Park vehicle entrance fee applies.

RECREATIONAL KAYAKING (pre-teens - adult) Sunday August 28, 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. If you are in the market for a kayak, come and learn the ins-and-outs of kayaking. Participants will have the opportunity to paddle a kayak on the park's pond. Kayaks, paddles, and adult life jackets will be provided. Get advice about selecting a recreational kayak that matches your paddling needs. Wear your old sneakers or water shoes and be prepared to get wet. Meet us at the Brick Road/pond parking lot for this fun and informative workshop! Advanced registration required (more events, next page)

(Nature Center events continued)

SOLAR OBSERVATION (all ages) Sunday September 4, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. View naturalistic activity on the sun safely through a telescope equipped with a special filter. Observe sunspots, solar flares, prominences, and other solar phenomena, as they are available. Learn how these storms can affect the earth as well as other interesting facts about our planet's closest star. **Gene Ramsey** and **Jennifer** and **Dave Skitt** of the **Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton** will conduct this activity. Clear skies required. Rain date is Monday September 5, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.. Park vehicle entrance fee applies.

TREES OF THE PARK (adult) Sunday September 11, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Washington Crossing State Park is home to scores of species of native trees and shrubs as well as many non-natives that have become naturalized. Join the park naturalist on a walk and learn how to identify many of the most common species.

BIKE HIKE (pre-teens - adult) Sunday September 18, 1:30 p.m. Take a guided bicycle ride up the Delaware & Raritan Canal Tow-path toward the Lambertville wing dam (approx. 13 miles round trip). Meet at the Nelson House parking lot. Bring your own bike and helmet. Advanced registration required.

DELAWARE RIVER ROMP (7 yrs. - adult) Sunday September 25, 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Participants will explore the flora, fauna, geology and some of the history associated with the Delaware River as it passes by WCSP. Children and willing adults should come prepared to get wet as they forage the riverbank for a variety of river organisms. Meet in front of the Nelson House in Washington Grove. Advanced registration required. (more events, next page)

**SUMMER PROGRAMS
AT THE VISITOR CENTER MUSEUM
(609) 737-0623**

SATURDAY MUSKET FIRING DEMONSTRATIONS. Saturday July 2, 9, 16, 30, August 6, 13, 20, September 3, 10, 17 & 24 2:00 p.m. Join a Park Historian for an interpretive talk about some of the weapons used during the American Revolution and their use during the Battle of Trenton. Included will be a musket firing demonstration. \$1.00 program fee. Park vehicle entrance fee applies on weekends and Holidays from May 28 to September 5.

READING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE. Monday July 4, 2:00 p.m. A reading of the Declaration of Independence will be followed by a musket firing demonstration. Park vehicle entrance fee applies.

SONGS AND STORIES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. Saturday July 23, 2:00 p.m. Using rousing period songs and stories Matthew Dodd will take you back to the days of the American Revolution.

OUTWATER'S MILITIA ENCAMPMENT Saturday August 27 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Come and enjoy Outwater's Militia as they drill and demonstrate the Colonial crafts that were their livelihood. Park vehicle entrance fee applies.

MUSKET FIRING DEMONSTRATION. Monday September 5, 2:00 p.m. Join a Park Historian for an interpretive talk about some of the weapons used during the American Revolution and their use during the Battle of Trenton. Included will be a musket firing demonstration. \$1 per person & Park vehicle entrance fee applies.

**SUMMER PROGRAMS
AT THE JOHNSON FERRY HOUSE
(609) 737-2515**

EARLY AMERICAN ICE CREAMS Monday, July 4, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Help make the ice cream. Samples will be available. Some hands-on and other activities will be ongoing. House will be open. Park vehicle entrance fee applies.

CAMP COOKING Sunday, August 21, 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. This will be an open hearth cooking demonstration. Meet at the Nelson House. Park vehicle entrance fee applies.

